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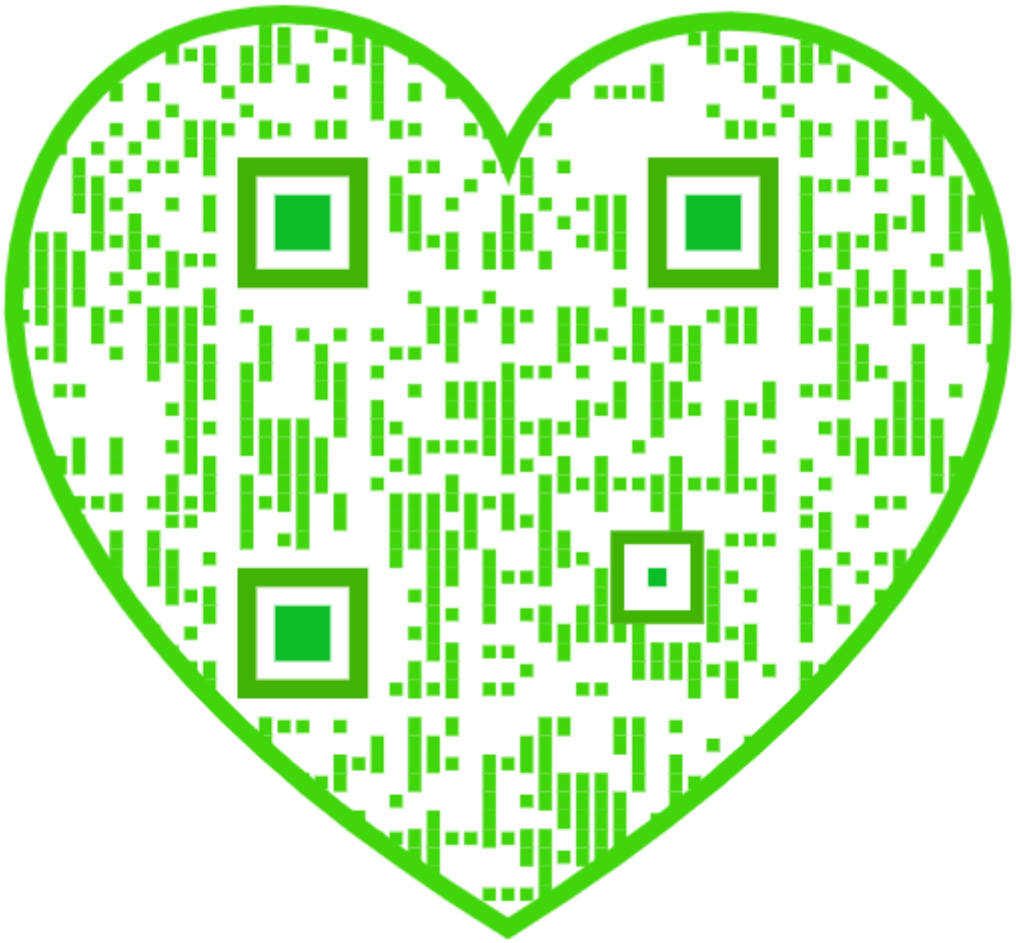

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SPALDING "RED COVER" SERIES OF
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No. 85R.

LAWN TENNIS FOR GIRLS

BY

MLLE. LENGLEN
The Noted French Player

Edited by
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I wish to thank Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Lapré for kind help in the work of translating from the French.

E. E. W.

Photos by "Sports and General," London

PREFACE TO AMERICAN EDITION

Every so often a really great player appears in the firmament and shines with unusual brilliancy.

Mlle. Lenglen is undoubtedly one of this galaxy and takes her place alongside May Sutton Bundy and Mrs. Lambert Chambers in the women's tennis Hall of Fame.

This book not only proves Mlle. Lenglen to be a born tennis player (if that term can be used) but a conscientious student of the game. It shows a thorough perception of the handicap under which the sex labors in this great sport, and in its simple treatment must assuredly aid the girl more than any treatise by any man, no matter how expert he may be. Many men also can improve their game by studying this book carefully. The soundness of tennis sense and the fact that Mlle. Lenglen practices whereof she preaches places her book in a class by itself in the literature of Lawn Tennis.

F. B. ALEXANDER.

LAWN TENNIS FOR GIRLS

CHAPTER I

"MY OWN GAME"

LET me begin this little book with some account of my own game; of how I learned it, developed it; of the strokes I play, the methods I use, and the principles on which my game is based.

Besides this, I shall write down anything in connection with my play and my experience of tennis which I think may prove helpful to readers.

I address myself specially to girls, but that is no reason why boys, and even men, should not find something useful in these pages. "Girls," taken literally, is a somewhat limited term. For the purposes of this book it may be stretched to cover "girls" of every age!

I started tennis at the age of eleven. Seeing my parents playing, I was eager to join them and asked them to give me a racket. To please me my mother bought me one. Thus parental example and parental kindness were responsible for the launching of my tennis career. It means a great deal to have parents who take an interest in one's game. My parents have always taken the keenest interest in my tennis, and I always try to play my best for their sakes, as well as my own.

After becoming the proud possessor of a racket, I was soon playing with my father. From the very first I showed a natural aptitude for the game and played with considerable skill. This induced my father to teach me the game in real earnest.

My progress was very quick, and after three months, although my backhand was

far from strong, I entered for the tournament at Chantilly. Receiving 15/3 in the handicap singles I won the second prize, meeting players of good ability.

For the benefit of those who are not familiar with handicap, let me explain that 15/3 means 15 one game and 30 the next throughout each set.

Our friends of the Nice Club took a great interest in me and gave me all possible encouragement. My game developed so rapidly that two years later I won the right to have my name inscribed on two important cups.

When fourteen I had the honor of playing with the famous Mr. Wilding in mixed doubles at Cannes. That was the beginning of my ascent, which in 1914 raised me to the championship of the world on hard courts.

A word here about my method of training. This is very simple.

My diet is quite normal; I drink no wine or alcoholic drinks of any kind, and I go to bed early. Both morning and evening I go through various simple physical exercises to keep the body fit and the limbs supple. In addition to this I practice with the skipping-rope. There is no better exercise than skipping for making one light and springy on the feet. High jumping, too, is a very favorite exercise of mine.

Never keep on with exercises until you feel tired. Physical fitness cannot be forced; it is a gradual growth.

Swimming is another form of physical culture of which I am very fond, and which has helped to get and keep me fit for hard tennis. Not only does swimming keep the limbs supple, but it increases one's stamina and lung capacity. Few things at tennis are worse, or more likely

Equipped for battle

(See page 17)

Correct grip for backhand, with thumb down

(See page 27)

to bring about defeat, than shortness of breath.

I am often asked who coached me at tennis. Was it this famous professional, or that? My game, many seem to think, can only have been the result of professional coaching.

Well, no professional ever coached me. From first to last my father has been my only coach. This is what he did. After he had coached me for a good while he made a careful selection of the best strokes of first-class players; strokes in which these players had specialized; strokes which he thought worth imitating. Only men's strokes were taken. I was to learn, as far as possible, to play like a man. I was to imitate these strokes, but without modelling myself on the movements of the players or their manner of making the strokes. I was to aim at getting the same *results* as they did, but in my own way.

I am sometimes asked on what player or players I have modelled my style.

My answer is—on none.

I made a point of playing in my own way, and there is only one stroke I ever consciously tried to copy, and that is the forehand drive of the great Mr. Wilding.

I take this stroke as high as possible so as to avoid any curve on the ball. I do not attempt to put top-spin on the ball, but hit it with a plain racket: this is fully explained in the chapter on ground-strokes. I am also most careful to keep well away from the ball and play the stroke without bending my arm.

All my other strokes have been bettered by assiduous practice in trying to get, by hitting the ball truly and by good timing, a maximum effect with a minimum effort. For this it is necessary to grip the racket

aright and keep the eye continuously on the ball.

Though I refer to the grip in another chapter, I may say that I grip tightly for all shots, especially for volleys, and have the handle of my racket well proportioned to the size of my hand, to avoid the racket turning during the delivery of the stroke.

I think my father's plan of selecting the strokes of good players for a guide might be adopted with advantage by all young players eager to improve their game.

Supposing you wish to learn the drop-shot, you only have to watch closely how Mrs. Larcombe, or Mrs. Lambert Chambers, winner of the English lady championship, or Miss Ryan, the Californian, my partner in the ladies' doubles championship at Wimbledon, play it to get a working knowledge of this shot. You will observe that they play it with a cer-

tain turn of the wrist. You have the secret of the shot. But you must, of course, learn to drive and volley before attempting anything so difficult as the drop-shot.

At all the principal tournaments you may see the different strokes of the game played in the right way. If you are fortunate enough to attend these as spectators, keep your eyes open and learn all you can.

Balance of the body is most important. Without perfect balance it is impossible to execute strokes well. I pay great attention to this.

What is perfect balance? you ask. If at the finish of a forehand drive your weight is on your right leg and you are leaning away from the ball, that is certainly *not* perfect balance.

Books on lawn tennis do not say much about foot work, and yet it is essential to have the feet in the right place. On this

depends balance and proper distribution of weight.

I advise all girls to take one stroke at a time, as I did, and practice it diligently till they can make it with certainty. After practicing some particular stroke for several days, with what confidence you will be able to use it in a match or a tournament.

One stroke at a time is the only really thorough method of building up your game.

In playing my backhand I sweep the ball, as it were, relying on swing, timing and follow-through to get pace rather than on hard hitting. A favorite shot of mine is a backhand drive down the line. For all backhand shots, whether drive or volley, I have my thumb down the back of the handle. This is clearly to be seen in the photographs of backhand shots.

For both forehand and backhand strokes I am careful to keep the racket in the vertical plane for the full delivery of the strokes.

As the service is a strong part of my game, it will be well if I describe my method.

I stand with the left foot in front, and sideways. I throw the ball up into the air about six feet and over the right shoulder, that is, on the right side of the head. At this moment the bust is inclined backwards, and with the handle of the racket gripped very tightly, the ball is hit very hard.. All the weight and swing of the body are put into the stroke and the ball is steered in the intended direction.

I act in an exactly similar way for the "smash," which is really a service from another part of the court.

As a chapter later on is devoted to tactics I need not say much here about my own tactics.

In playing singles my first concern is to find out my opponent's chief weakness, and then her strong point. Having discovered this it is then only necessary to attack her weakness and prevent her playing her best strokes. Being a volleyer, I get to the net as soon as I see a good opening. Thus, if in reply to my first, fast service my opponent sends a short return, I consider this a good opening.

If I find an opponent equally good on both forehand and backhand, and driving a good length, I try to entice her to the net with a short ball in order to pass her down the sidelines or lob over her head.

I must not dwell any more on my own game, or I shall anticipate too much what I wish to say in subsequent chapters.

Temperament plays a big part in tennis. Personally I never suffer from "nerves." A big occasion and a big crowd of spectators stimulate me to play my best.

I will conclude this chapter with a word or two about courts.

Grass courts are practically unknown in France. All my tennis has been played on hard courts—gravel, sand, etc. So I was surprised, when I came to England, to find the grass courts so little different from those I had been accustomed to. They were not so fast, of course, and the ball did not come to one so quickly. Fortunately I am quick-footed, and this did not bother me. When the courts were at all wet, then one noticed the difference in bound, the ball not getting up high enough for the horizontal drive.

It was then that those English players who could play the cut strokes gained an advantage.

Beginning of forehand horizontal drive. Note how weight is on right foot

(See page 32)

Beginning of backhand drive

(See page 36)

CHAPTER II

EQUIPMENT

As you cannot play without a racket, let us go at once to a first-class maker and choose a really good racket.

A great deal of care is needed in selecting a racket. So many beginners and poor players sacrifice goodness to cheapness. This is the worst kind of economy.

You will never become a good player or enjoy your tennis with a poor weapon. Much of the bad play of girls is caused by bad rackets, loosely strung, ill-balanced, with awkward handles and clumsy frames.

A good racket gives confidence. Armed with it a player feels she can and must do it credit. It will never do for her to disgrace her good racket by bad play.

She is on her mettle, which is, of course, the right attitude.

The first consideration is weight, which will vary according to the age of the player. I myself never use a heavier racket than 13½ ounces.

After weight, balance. The evenly-balanced racket is best for all-round purposes. The usual balance is from 12½ to 13½ inches, measuring from end of handle. An evenly-balanced racket will remain balanced; if heavy in the head the head will sink, if light in the head the handle will sink.

For volleying, service, and overhead strokes a light-headed racket is best. For driving and baseline play a racket with the weight in the head is best. I warn players against using too heavy a racket. It hampers their wrist play, and few girls have strong wrists.

Now for the size of the handle. The big handle has passed away, as extremes always do. A good average circumference is five inches. The great thing is to have a comfortable handle which the fingers can easily span. Too big a handle cramps the wrist and interferes with volleying and all deft shots. A big handle also upsets the balance of a racket.

See that your racket is tightly strung with *medium* gut, not thin, nor thick. These are regulation terms, rackets being strung with gut of three thicknesses. By "tightly" I do not mean like a board. If you flick your nails sharply over the face of your racket and it gives a nice musical ring, you may assume that the strings are of the right tautness.

Avoid a clumsy frame. The long, narrow frame and the very wide frame are both to be avoided. You must strike the happy medium.

Many players use grips of various kinds on their handles. I never do. I am opposed to a rubber grip, as it heats the hands and causes blisters. Many of the Colonial and some English players use surgical whipping; it gives a good grip. A well-shaped handle, sufficiently rough, is, in my opinion, best for all players except those with very dry hands.

If your hands get damp in hot weather, and your racket slips, a pinch of sawdust, supplied at all tournaments, is the simple remedy.

Some players use rosin, and certainly this gives a clinging grip. After all, it is largely a matter of individual taste, always providing that the artificial grip does not disturb the balance of the racket.

If your handle gets too smooth and slippery, it is very simple to rough this with a file.

All-important is the care of the racket. Don't be worried if the strings slip out of place, as they often will. They will readjust themselves all right. But do be worried if your strings begin to fray or if the frame shows signs of warping. If the latter, put it into a frame and screw it up tightly. A warped racket can be pulled round; but you must never leave it out of its frame when not in use. A good way to treat a fraying string is to wind a piece of silk round the weakening spot. This may prove the stitch in time which saves a new string. Take extra care of your racket.

When you have played in the rain, or on a wet court, do not rub your racket with a cloth. This will fray the strings. Dab it dry on either side and put it into its frame.

This reminds me that if you play in matches and tournaments you want two

rackets, one for dry courts, and one for wet. Be sure they are both of the same build and weight. Be sure, too, to have your name clearly marked on handle.

You cannot play good tennis with dirty balls. A little pains will always give you clean balls. You may wash them with soap and water and a nail-brush, you may rub them on cocoanut-matting, or you may brush them with a stiffish brush. But there is a better and simpler way, of which an English friend has told me. First of all dry the dirty balls; then rub them all over with dry pipe-clay, working it in with the hands, and finally brush all the pipe-clay off with a stiffish brush. The balls come up almost new. Necessarily the felt loses some of its nap, but at least the balls are clean. Never play with last season's balls; they are soft and have lost their bound and will put you off when you come to play with good balls.

If you have a court of your own be sure that the lines are clearly marked. You can run these over in a few minutes with a marker, which can always be kept with whitening ready mixed in it. It is impossible to play with pleasure or accuracy if the lines are faint.

Be sure, too, that your net has a centre tape and that your net is of the right height—3 feet at the center, 3 feet 6 inches at the posts. This is all-important. Have a net gauge—a lath of wood 3 feet long. For playing singles posts 3 feet 6 inches high should be placed in the ground 3 feet from the sidelines.

You cannot be too particular about any of these details.

CHAPTER III

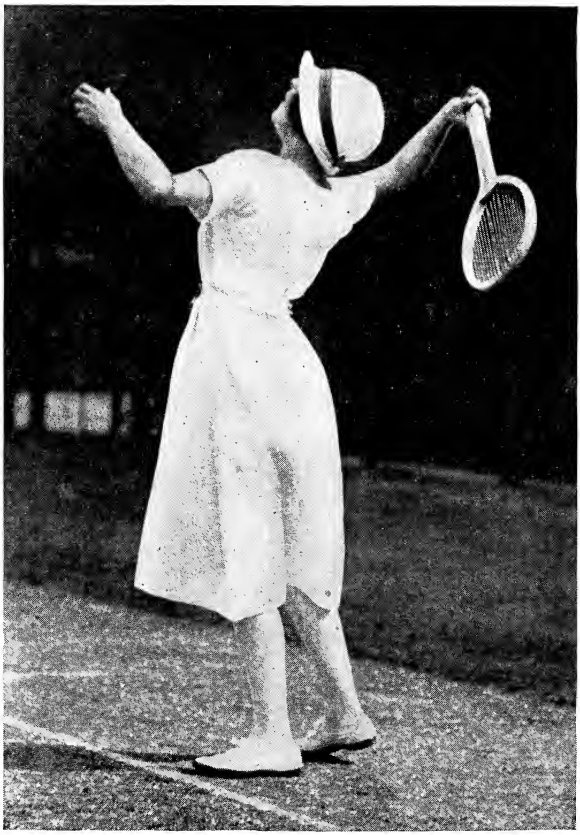
ELEMENTS OF THE GAME, AND STYLE

THE greater part of this chapter is very much for beginners. But it would be no bad thing if the majority of players began all over again. There are many players who, had they only begun right, would now be in the front rank, instead of third-rate performers. Even now it is not too late to mend. But, alas! many a player is so foolish that she will not give up her bad, old way for a new and better. She will not unlearn and learn anew because during the transitionary stage she will play worse than before. She will not endure this, not even for the sake of great future benefit.

The Dohertys claimed that two things chiefly brought them success:

Finishing backhand drive. Note the follow-through to the full extent of arm

(See page 37)



Overhead service—back view

(See page 58)

(1) Keeping the eye on the ball till it hit the racket, or nearly so.

(2) A good style.

The former is possible to all. The latter every one of us must try to acquire.

The very first thing you must do is to *grip* your racket right.

There is a great deal of idle talk about the "unchanging" grip. That is to say, one grip which does for both forehand and backhand.

Mr. R. F. Doherty used this grip, and, as he was one of the great masters of the game, many players think they must use it too. For not more than one player in a hundred is this grip a natural or a comfortable one. Give up the idea at once that this grip is necessary. I have never used it. I always change the grip for the backhand. Players who use it are quite the exception.

Grip your racket naturally for the forehand stroke. Grip it in such a way that you could strike the hardest blow with the face of it. No forcing of the hand and wrist into some fixed position. Freedom and comfort are the test. If your grip does not give you these, then your grip is wrong.

If you must have some definite guide, the ball of the thumb should fit over the facet of the handle, which is a continuation of the frame of the racket. That should give a good average grip. But no hard-and-fast rule can be laid down, for many good players, especially those who put lift and top-spin on the ball, grip more at the back, while many others bring the hand further forward.

Very few girls grip right for the backhand strokes. This is one reason why their backhand play is so weak.

The common mistake, and chief cause of weakness, is having the wrist in front of the racket *pulling* it, instead of behind, *thrusting* it.

The backhand grip is not easily described on paper. Find out with what grip you can strike the hardest backhand blow; or try this plan: stretch your arm straight out in front of you with the palm of the hand down; crook the elbow till the forearm is at right-angles to the upper arm; then place the racket, which is at right-angles to the ground, in the right hand. You will have the backhand grip, save in one important detail. Place the thumb down the back of the handle.

Why? you may ask. Because it keeps racket, and so, ball, under better control. The thumb steers the ball and enables the player to place it with much greater accuracy and deftness.

Beginners are often troubled as to how they shall change the grip from forehand to backhand, and vice versa.

If you rest the neck of the racket in your left hand you will find the change very easy. This is the ideal way to hold the racket when waiting for the ball. It makes for steadiness too. I often find that beginners hold the handle right at the end, adding, of course, to their difficulties. An inch below the leather, and lower down for a weak backhand, say, is a safe guide.

Having learned the right grips you must now learn to hit the ball.

As ground strokes are the subject of the next chapter, we will not here discuss the playing of any particular shot.

Beginners always tend to get too near the ball, thus cramping their strokes and their style. You will never have a good style unless you keep well away from the ball, swing your racket well back and

follow through to the full extent of arm and racket.

Be sure you are firmly on both feet when playing any shot. No girl who jumps about while playing a shot will ever be much good.

Do not run backwards for shots; turn and run sideways. Never play any ground shots with your body square to the net. The sideways position of the body is right.

Remember, your first aim is to hit the ball over the net, the second into the court. You will the more easily do this by keeping your eye on the ball till it *hits* your racket. If you would only make this a habit you would be surprised how easy tennis can be.

Do not try to skim the net at first. A good length is far better than pace. The latter will come all in good time. A "good length" ball pitches within a foot

or two of the baseline. There are other "good lengths"; a ball pitching just over the net is often a good length.

Girls are imitative creatures and may greatly improve their style by watching, and then imitating, first-class players, though not, of course, their mannerisms.

Attain a good style; it will make the game easier and pleasanter. Very few players with a bad style have ever become really great.

Finally, take tennis seriously. It is painful to see children "ragging" at tennis, treating it as a joke. Parents should forbid this kind of thing.

If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing as well as you can.

CHAPTER IV

GROUND STROKES

WHAT are ground strokes? some one is sure to ask. They are strokes made off a ball that has bounced.

Let us begin with the forehand drive.

This drive is of different kinds.

Undoubtedly the best forehand drive is the horizontal drive, played, with variations.

One advantage of this drive is that it saves time—a most important consideration. The sooner you play the ball after it bounces the better. One of your aims must be to catch your opponent out of position. The quicker you play the ball the more likely are you to do this.

This drive is taken at the top of the bound, when at about the height of the

shoulder. You can understand the loss of time if the ball is allowed to drop to within a foot, or a couple of feet of the ground, as I noticed several ladies in England allowed it to.

To play the horizontal drive successfully, the arm must be fully extended, the ball taken at about, or a little below, the level of the shoulder, and hit with confidence, firmness and a full swing.

Capt. Wilding, who had the best forehand drive I have ever seen, took the ball about the height of the waist. But it would not do for everyone to copy this.

Now there are three distinct ways of applying the racket for this drive.

You may hit the ball with a plain racket, that is a racket which meets the ball at right angles to the ground, and remains in that position through the stroke. There is no spin on the ball thus struck.

Low backhand volley. Note the horizontal position of the racket

(See page 43)

Smashing—eyes on the ball

(See page 61)

You may whip the ball up from behind, putting top-spin on the ball and thus causing the ball to spring forward on touching the ground.

Or, thirdly, you may turn the racket slightly over the ball as you strike it.

Remember this, that when you meet an opponent who uses the top-spin drive, you need to grip your racket very firmly and watch the ball closely. You must attack the ball boldly. If you do not the ball will fly all over the place. Though never seeing her play, I am told Miss May Sutton puts a tremendous amount of top-spin on her drive.

I never use top-spin myself, but hit the ball with a plain racket, and believe this is the best way.

One trouble about the horizontal drive is that on a slow, wet court the ball does not get up the convenient height. Well, if the ball does not get up, you must get

down. In other words you must stoop, and for the rest you must do the best you can. If you have a head on your shoulders and any sort of gift for the game, you will rise superior to difficulties of this kind. In fact, difficulties are the test of ability.

There is another way of treating a ball which rises to the height of the shoulder. You may cut it with your racket in a vertical position, almost after the manner of a service. This is a great shot with some players. It comes very fast off the racket.

All important for the horizontal drive, and for the other two which I shall briefly describe in a moment, is the position of the feet. You will never make this drive well if you face the net. Your feet must be parallel to the cross-lines of the court, not the sidelines. To put it simply, you must stand sideways, with the left foot in advance of the right.

The underhand lift drive is out of date, except such, as I am told, is used by the Japanese, which demands a very powerful wrist flick, but many players use a shot much like it. The ball is allowed to drop within a foot or two of the ground and the racket swung on to it with an upward blow, much after the manner of the ordinary underhand service.

For the cut drive the racket passes under the ball from right to left, putting spin on it and causing it to break on pitching from left to right, that is, to the backhand of the opposing player. On wet courts, of which players usually get a good many in England, the cut drive is very effective, it keeps low and tends to shoot. It is also, owing to the spin on the ball, a very nasty drive to volley.

One advantage to the player who uses the cut drive is that it is easier for her to play drop shots and lobs.

In France we make little, or no, use of cut shots. We believe in hitting the ball hard and clean with the full face of the racket.

Now for the backhand drive, so difficult to most girls. You know the grip. If not, refresh your memory by turning to Chapter II.

As few girls could ever master a backhand drive with topspin, I shall describe only the cut drive and the plain-hit drive.

To take the latter first.

Get your feet right. The correct position of the feet is essential for the proper playing of the backhand. Right foot well in advance of left, and body in a sideways position to the net. Keep well away from the ball, take it about the height of the waist, slightly bend the right knee, and swing the racket well on to it and follow through to the full extent of arm and racket.

Remember that to get accuracy of direction you must send your racket after the ball, so to speak. Or, to put it differently, you must follow through in the line of the flight of the ball. Test and prove it.

Wrong body and feet position and wrong grip are chiefly the reasons why most girls play such a poor backhand shot.

Be sure to keep the racket in a horizontal position. See that the head of the racket is not below the level of the wrist.

The way for a beginner to learn the backhand stroke is to stab it. For this practically only wrist and forearm are used. Later the swing may be lengthened and finally full use made of the body. It is wonderful what power may be put into a backhand drive if the player expands her chest and throws back her shoulders at the moment of hitting the ball.

To drive backhand with cut, the racket passes under the ball from left to right. Many girls who play the top-spin drive forehand, employ this cut drive backhand. It seems very common in England.

The lob is a ground stroke no player could do without. Unless accurately played it is a gift to your opponent. Lob high and deep, high enough to clear your opponent, deep enough to make her run out of court.

A lob that pitches within a yard of the baseline is a good one, that pitches on the service line a bad one.

Grip firmly, keep your eye on the ball, and play it with great care. Go out onto your court and practice lobbing, half-an-hour at a time. It will repay you. Mr. Roper Barrett, who is regarded in England as prince of lobbers, learned this way, so I am told.

Drop-shots are very useful against baseline players. They are risky, of course, and need a deft touch. They are best played with a cut. Remember that there is nothing mean about them, as many people imagine. They are a high form of skill, among the most delicate shots in the game. Mrs. Lambert Chambers often used this shot against me in the challenge round of the championship at Wimbledon.

CHAPTER V

VOLLEY AND HALF-VOLLEY

I FEEL very much at home in this chapter. My favorite place is at the net, and I get there on the first chance. I would encourage all girls to do the same. Tennis would seldom be dull if girls learned to volley. Nothing is more monotonous than a girls' double with all four players sticking to the back of the court. Those who teach the young tennis should insist on one player on each side being up at the net.

The rising generation must be a race of volleyers.

It is curious that while boys volley from the earliest age, girls invariably play from the back of the court. It amounts almost to a creed with some people that

Beginning of forehand drive, as played by Mrs. Lambert Chambers

(See page 32)

Another finish of the forehand drive. According to orthodox ideas the weight is on the wrong foot

(See page 37)

volleying is for men and boys, baseline play for women and girls.

Girl volleyers are so rare as to create quite a sensation.

Apart from any tradition in the matter, girls do not volley because they think volleying is difficult. I am going to try to persuade them here that it is easier than strokes off the ground. It is really a matter of common sense. The ball may do so many different things after it bounces. It may get up high, it may keep low, or it may screw, or shoot or hang or take a forward leap. Then the player must calculate the best height at which to take the ball. The volley has none of these difficulties. You simply have to put your racket in the way of the ball, square to it. The racket and the ball will do the rest.

Once get rid of the idea that the volley is difficult and you have overcome the chief difficulty of the volley.

Don't you all know how a girl when she is caught in the middle of the court and faced with a volley gets flurried, probably shrieks, and gives a wild hit at the ball, catching it as often as not on the frame of her racket? All so unnecessary. If she steadied herself, got her feet firmly on the ground, gripped her racket, kept her eye on the ball and let it hit her racket, the result would be very different. And all these things are quite simple to perform. She is not being asked to do anything difficult.

You volley badly because you imagine you must *hit* the ball. If you get near enough to the net very little hitting will be necessary.

Let me emphasize here that the worst possible place in the court for volleying is on the service line. The nearer you are to the net the better, especially when your partner is serving. There is no

definite distance, but anything from three feet to three yards is a good average distance.

In learning to volley hold the racket very firm. As you grow in confidence you will increase the swing and the power of your shot. The racket must be held square to the ground, that is at right angles to it. Wrists play a big part in volleying.

It is important for both forehand and backhand volleying to keep the wrist so pressed down that the head of the racket is above it, or, at any rate, not below it. This holds good for low volleying, the stroke at which the Dohertys are said never to have had an equal. If you are to low volley well you must go down to the ball by bending knees and body. The low volley played with a hanging racket is not nearly so accurate.

Do not rush at a volley. Observe a really good volleyer and you will see that she steadies herself for the shot, and is, when she plays it firmly, on both feet. No girl who flings herself about in the act of hitting the ball will ever be much good.

I firmly believe that the thumb should be down the handle for backhand driving, and for volleying as well, though but few of the better male players use this grip.

Many of you have never heard of such a grip before. I promise you a new enjoyment in the game if you will only try it.

By getting near to the net, you volley rising balls instead of the dropping ones you would have to deal with further back in the court. Nothing is harder to volley than a dropping ball; nothing easier than a rising one. When volleying the latter

be sure to volley downwards: near the net this is easy. Played from there it should always be an attacking stroke.

Long rallies are not necessarily a sign of good tennis. It is your business to put an end to long rallies. The net is the best place for this. I have seen rallies go on till one's eyes ached with following the ball; rallies which one of the players would have brought to a successful end after two or three exchanges by going up and volleying.

And how watchful you need to be at the net! If in a double you must keep on your toes, ready for a dash across the net.

In garden-party tennis you will no doubt be accused of poaching, but that is simply ignorance. In this kind of pat-ball tennis it is almost rude for a man to serve first! And it used to be the height of bad manners to trespass in your partner's court.

The net player, remember, has a free hand at the net. She can go across whenever she likes.

The "stop and draw" volleys are very useful to the net player. They drop the ball short over the net and are effective when the opponent is out of position at the back of the court.

They must be played—the "draw" by cutting or drawing the racket across the ball, the "stop" by relaxing the grip, and as it were, withdrawing the racket from the ball, only much practice will enable you to play these volleys at all successfully. It requires courage and confidence to use these and other drop shots in a match, because of the attendant risk.

No volley is less played in lawn tennis than the "lob" volley. It is one of the most difficult strokes to execute, and requires the utmost precision, and must be done, as it were, on the spur of the mo-

ment. It is generally played with back-spin on it to keep the ball in court.

It is most generally used in doubles play when all four players are at the net. After a series of short exchanges at the net, a "lob" volley is apt to take one's opponents by surprise. It has the effect, if of the right length and height, of driving them back and giving the other side sole possession of the net, which is what they most want.

This volley is very seldom seen in ladies' doubles, for the simple reason that all four players are rarely up at the net together. Even so, it might often be used with advantage instead of the usual hit down the court. The player at the net would sometimes be wiser to lob volley the opposing net player than to return the ball to the player at the back of the court.

As overhead volleys are for the next chapter, I will pass on to a stroke which

is between a volley and a ground stroke, namely, the half-volley.

For the benefit of beginners I had better define this. A half-volley is played when the ball is struck directly after it hits the ground. English boys will recognize it as the same thing as the drop-kick at Rugby football. Also they will recognize it as a cricket term.

The secret of playing the half-volley is to keep your eye on the ball. The stroke is as easy again if this is really done.

Have you ever seen Mr. Caridia, one of the famous English players, play? He makes the half-volley look a very simple stroke. In fact, it is his chief stroke. He attacks with it and defends with it; it is almost his whole game. I played several practice games with him at Wimbledon and can write of his half-volley from personal knowledge.

Forehand cut drive or underhand service, as played by Mrs. Larcombe

(See page 35)

Backhand cut drive, as played by Mrs. Larcombe

(See page 36)

When a girl has played a half-volley ten to one she regards it either as a fluke or as a very wonderful performance. It need not be the former and it certainly is not the latter.

If a volley is not possible and you cannot get back for a comfortable drive then you must try for a half-volley. Steady yourself for it, look down at the ball and do not lift your head.

Do not play the half-volley with a hanging racket—though sometimes that cannot be avoided—but try to get the racket as near as possible to the horizontal. Of course you will need to stoop for this stroke.

Mr. William Johnston, the American champion, is a past master of the half-volley on attack, as is also, I have heard, the internationalist, Mr. F. B. Alexander.

The half-volley is chiefly an emergency, or, at any rate, defensive stroke. Mr.

Norman Brookes often returns smashes by means of the half-volley with great ease and without any hurry.

You may observe one thing about all the best players of the half-volley. They pick it up with a very quick action. Another thing they do when using it for attack is to turn the racket over the ball, somewhat, when hitting it.

It is a very pretty stroke, especially on the backhand, and well worth learning.

The volleyer must, of course, be sure of it, for she will frequently have balls dropping just where a half-volley is the only stroke she can use.

Some, perhaps, will say that the half-volley is too difficult for beginners. But you hope to be something more than beginners soon. And you can easily leave the study of the half-volley till you have learned the more simple strokes of the game.

CHAPTER VI

SERVICE AND OVERHEAD PLAY

So many young players think of the service merely as the means of starting the game. They do not regard it as a weapon of attack at all. And yet it can be, should be, indeed, and often is, the chief attacking force in a player's game.

Realizing this, the young Colonial players make service the chief feature of their game. The American, Mr. McLoughlin, made his great reputation chiefly on his service. So has Mr. Patterson, the Australian. And many others owe their success mainly to their service.

If you can devise a service which will win you points outright you will, of course, greatly strengthen your game.

But I am quite sure girls could learn to serve a great deal better than they do.

Which shall a girl use—the overhead or the underhand service? To use the overhead service for the sake of using it is silly.

Many girls serve overhead because they think it looks well. That is a poor reason. They cannot volley, cannot smash, and play entirely from the back of the court. And yet they serve overhead—a stroke they never use during the rest of the game.

Most first-class ladies serve overhead, though Mrs. Larcombe, an ex-champion, serves underhand. Certainly it may be said that an underhand service is no bar to success.

If you are a baseline player with no ability to volley or smash you should serve underhand, and your service should be as like as possible to your forehand ground shot.

As you are allowed two serves, you may take any risks you like with the first. But if you find you are never getting your first fast service in, do not go on blazing away with it. Try a medium one. Better ten medium ones than one fast one and nine soft ones which an opponent can do anything she likes with. Many girls who serve underhand stand far behind the baseline. It does not seem to strike them that the further they stand from the net, the slower the ball when it reaches their opponent. By toeing the baseline they could serve just as fast and save themselves a good deal of energy, and by using the same amount of energy could, of course, serve proportionately faster. Their reason for standing far back is that they serve fewer faults. Practice and perseverance would soon enable them to serve just as accurately from the baseline.

The trouble with girls nowadays is that they will play *games* every time they go to the courts, instead of practicing *strokes.*

If you would only take a stroke at a time and practice, practice, practice it, you would build up a sound game and be sure of success.

Supposing those of you who serve underhand decide that you will practice serving, what are you to strive for?

First of all you must strike for a good length. You must try to serve within a foot of the service line. Then you must vary the direction of the service, serving sometimes down the middle line, sometimes into the opposite corner. Then try a short one, dropped just over the net with enough cut on it to keep it low. Then try serving from different parts of the baseline. You are not bound to serve from one particular spot. To practice

these things will give you confidence when you come to play in a game or match. You can experiment upon your opponents, but with the comfortable feeling that it is not really an experiment for you. You have tried it before.

Use your wits when serving. Find out the weakness of your opponent. Is she weak on her backhand? then serve to that. A cut service to a weak backhand on a wet court is very deadly.

Coming to the overhead service: it must be pretty clear that if you can throw a cricket ball after a boy's and not a girl's fashion, you ought to be able to serve overhead.

As cricket is fairly generally taught at girls' schools, most English girls know how to throw, and throwing is just the action of serving. If you wish to be a volleyer, you should certainly learn to

serve overhead, as it will make smashing easier for you.

No two players serve just alike, but there are certain general principles which you must observe.

Take up your position behind the base-line, with your left toe a few inches behind it, and well in advance of the right foot, and your body sideways. You will never serve with much power if you stand too square to the net.

For the beginning of the service the body is arched back, the right shoulder pressed back and down, the wrist kept loose, and the racket allowed to drop behind the back.

You will see all this well illustrated by almost any of the first-class men, and by such players as Mrs. Lambert Chambers, while the photographs of myself serving clearly show this.

The throw-up of the ball is most important. The height to which it should be thrown troubles many players. Some do not throw it high enough; some few too high. The latter are generally bothered by a wind.

I think it is well to try to serve as correctly as possible from the start; and not begin, as some advise, by merely patting the ball over the net, or you may fall into a bad habit.

The ball should be thrown up slightly to the right of the head to the height of about six feet or a little less.

Practice throwing up the ball. On the accuracy of this depends the success of the service. I do not recommend the beginner to carry three balls in her hand.

As soon as the ball is at the required height, the racket is swung up and over the right shoulder. Without proper tim-

ing the service will not be a good one. But timing cannot be taught on paper.

The importance of the follow through cannot be exaggerated. In a correct follow through the racket finishes past the left knee, or, in the case of some players, past the right.

After deciding where she will place her service, the player must look at nothing but the ball till she has struck it. To try to look at two things at once, at the ball and where she means to place it, results in failure.

Length and placing are just as important, of course, as in underhand service. It is certainly easier to place an overhead service accurately. Some authorities claim that greater accuracy is given by having the first finger somewhat up the racket.

The Americans introduced a service which has since been called "American." The special feature of it is its big break.

As you will often meet this—if you play in tournaments—it will be well if I describe it here and give you a few tips as to how you should play it.

Meeting it for the first time and knowing nothing of its peculiarities, you will be terribly puzzled by it. But if you take note of what follows you will at least be able to make an intelligent attempt to play it.

This service is of two kinds: the "ordinary" American and the "reverse" American. In the "ordinary," the server's racket crosses the ball from left to right; in the reverse, from right to left. A little thought will make it quite clear that in the "ordinary" the ball is spinning from left to right and on pitching will break to the right, that is to the backhand of the player receiving the service. The "reverse" is just the other way and breaks to the forehand. Remember this: the ball always

breaks the way the racket goes, or in more usual terms, "breaks with the racket."

So you can always tell which way the ball will break. If the server's racket goes from left (his) to right, the ball will break from left to right—that is, to your backhand. If his racket crosses his face from right to left, the ball will break that way—that is to your forehand.

Now you will know what to expect.

As the American service has much spin on it you need to grip your racket very firmly and hit the ball boldly. A half-hearted hit will meet with failure.

This next point is most important. As the ordinary American service is spinning from left to right, it tends to go on in that direction off the racket. Returning it out of the left court with your backhand, you will need to aim well inside the sideline if you are to keep the ball in. That is the experience of every one who has met this

service. After all it is a matter of common sense and spin.

The reverse service tends to fly off the racket the other way. Therefore you must aim to the left of the spot you want to send the ball to.

I am not going to advise girls to learn how to serve the American service, though this will no doubt come in time. Miss Ryan serves a sort of reverse American, or rather, perhaps, reverse cut. Possibly the American service would be too exacting for girls, and few of them would have strong enough wrists. But no doubt if they began early enough they would pick it up all right.

As overhead play is included in this chapter, I must refer to the "smash." This, when on the forehand, is similar to the service, and must be played in the same way. Few girls play it well. They hit wildly at the ball and take their eye off

it, and do not get far enough under it. The ball should be rather behind the player's head than in front of it, except, of course, in the case of an easy ball near the net.

There are quiet smashes as well as hard ones, though many players seem to think there are only the latter. Games without number are lost by players slamming at an overhead ball instead of quietly placing it out of their opponent's reach.

The backhand smash is much more difficult. Thumb down is essential to this stroke. I have found it very useful in doubles play.

One is often called upon to play a volley just about the height of the head. This is played with a vertical racket, sometimes as a chop stroke, at others as a push stroke.

CHAPTER VII

TACTICS

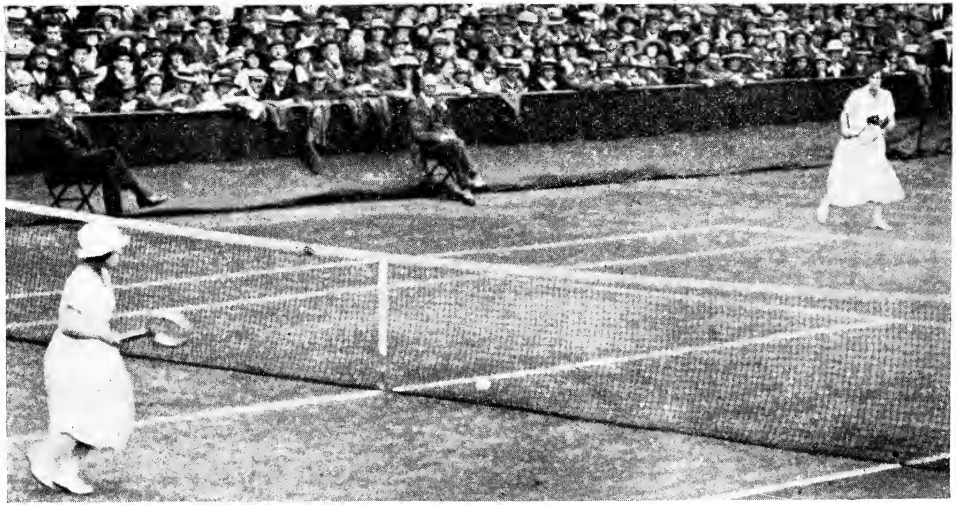
IT is necessary to assume now that you can make the different strokes of the game with some degree of ease and accuracy. Until you can do this it is, of course, absurd to talk of tactics. Only when you can control the ball and make it do more or less what you want it to do can you employ tactics.

Tactics are, as it were, the brains of the game—the devices by which you outwit your opponent.

I wish every girl had the opportunity of watching, say, Mrs. Lambert Chambers play. Many players keep banging the ball over the net with the hope that sooner or later their opponent will miss it. Every shot Mrs. Chambers plays has a definite

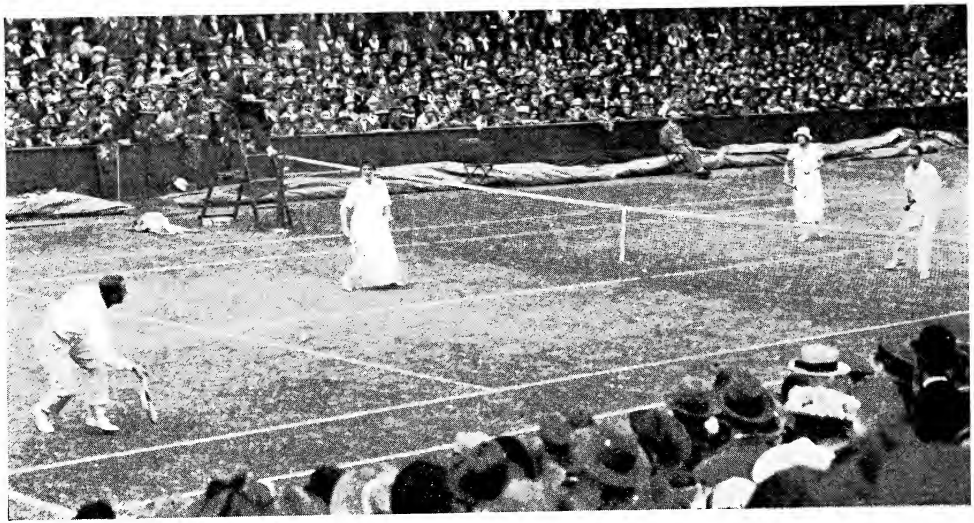
purpose. To get your opponent out of position to one side of the court, and then place the ball out of her reach in the other; to draw your opponent up to the net and then play a quick low lob to the baseline; to keep the ball away from your opponent's pet stroke and hammer her weak; to drive your opponent beyond the baseline and then drop a short one just over the net: these and many others are the tactics you must employ.

And another thing one observes about Mrs. Chambers is her patience. She is never in a hurry. Impetuous young players want to score a winner the very first shot. Mrs. Chambers keeps on and on playing for the opening which is sure to come. I take Mrs. Chambers, not because she is the only tactician, but because of the personal experience I have had of her tactics. I have never played against a lady so quick to seize openings.



Tactics. In the final of the championship vs. Mrs. Satterthwaite. At the net with opponent position at back of court.

(See page 63)



Mixed doubles. About to lob.

(See page 72)

The tactics in singles and doubles will be different.

Take singles first.

Supposing you are playing in a tournament, tactics begin with the spin of the racket. "Rough" you call and win. What advantage is this? In tournaments, you know, you change courts after the first game and every succeeding odd game. If you win the toss you will choose either service or the *worst* end. If you have a strong service elect to serve. If you have a weak service elect to play the first game against the sun or wind or bad background, or whatever it is that makes one court worse than the other.

In singles you should stand as near as possible to the middle of the baseline and serve down the middle line. If a baseline player you will retreat behind the baseline after serving, further on a fast than a slow court. Keep on your toes, ready to

spring forward, or to dart this way or that. Remember that it is easier to run forward than back, therefore the importance of keeping well back.

So many girls stand in the most difficult place in court, midway between base and service lines.

Where you must stand when receiving the service largely depends on the kind of service. If fast, you need to stand almost on the baseline; if slow, half-way between base and service lines.

In returning the service do not always try for a winning shot at once. Play the return of service down the line. Do not try for pace, but for a good length. This will drive your opponent well back and enable you to get to the net.

To discover your opponent's weakness is the first step to successful tactics. And it must soon become obvious to any one with eyes what a player's chief weakness

is. Most players are stronger on the forehand than backhand. That means you must attack chiefly the backhand of such players. This is definite and simple enough. You have got to keep on playing the ball to your opponent's backhand until she breaks down or until she returns a short easy ball which you can kill or quickly put beyond her reach. Be warned, however, for there is such a thing as giving your opponent's weak stroke so much practice that it becomes strong. If you see this is happening, change suddenly and place the ball to her forehand.

Do not forget that two can play at tactics. And an important part of tactics is to discover what are your opponent's tactics.

For example: a player with a strong forehand drive will tempt you to feed this stroke by leaving her forehand court open. Well, you are not to be tempted. Keep

on playing the ball well into her left court. And sooner or later in her desire to get in a forehand shot she will leave the right court *too* open. Then is your chance to slip the ball past her into the right-hand corner of her court.

How often does the young player think of lobbing in the middle of a long rally to rest herself? By lobbing, a player can recover her breath and her position.

When your opponent is in an attacking position at the net and you are at the back of the court you have one of two courses open to you. Either you can try to pass her, or you may lob over her head. The latter is the safer, but it does not necessarily win you the point. The passing shot is risky, but, if successfully played, wins you the point. You should copy the example of Mrs. Chambers when trying to pass an opponent at the net. After making up her mind where to place the

ball, and looking once in that direction, she keeps her eye on the ball and ignores the player at the net.

If you worry too much about the player at the net you are certain to look at her more than at the ball. If so you will play into her hands.

Girls who wish to be net players must not think they can get to the net directly they have returned the service; they must not go up to the net on every ball. It would be folly to go up, for example, on a ball pitching on the service line. Any ordinary player could pass you if you did. On the other hand, you may safely go up on a hard drive to the middle, between service and base lines. It is very difficult for an opponent to pass you from there.

When you get to the net you will be worse off than further back, unless you know how to cross volley or stop volley.

You must be ready to change your tactics. If you are a baseliner against a baseliner, try running in to the net now and then and see if this will put your opponent off. If it flusters her continue these tactics.

Vary your tactics when you are 40/15, or wanting an ace for the set or match. Serve from a different part of the court. Lob if you have been driving; drive hard if you have been lobbing. If at this stage you get an easy overhead ball at the net, kill it! Countless matches and championships have been lost because players were too timid to take risks when within an ace of victory. Then a bold policy is nearly always the best. It was by taking risks that I won the championship at Wimbledon. When the score was 7 all in the final set I hit hard to Mrs. Chambers's backhand and ran in, winning the next two games.

When leading 40/15 you can afford to take risks, and, for example, serve your second service as fast as your first.

Never abandon hope or effort. If it is 5 love and 40/15 against you, hope and strive. Many matches and championships have been won from a position so seemingly hopeless. Nothing so demoralizes a player as the gradual dwindling away of a long lead.

Attack is usually the best kind of defence, but defensive tactics are sometimes the only means of winning. The other player gets the attack in her hands and you are compelled to defend. You keep on getting everything back. She makes more mistakes with her vigorous attack than you do, and in the end you win. That is a fairly common story.

Ladies' doubles are a most enjoyable form of the game if one on either side is at the net.

Tactics consist mainly of keeping the ball away from the player at the net and intercepting the ball at the net. The combination for doubles, usually regarded as ideal, is a good driver and a good volleyer. The volleyer stands at the net when her partner is serving. When the volleyer is serving the latter stands back and the volleyer runs in on her service. There is room here for some variety. But the best combination is that of two volleyers who are able also to drive when obliged to do so. The final of the ladies' doubles at Wimbledon is the best proof of this.

In mixed doubles, too, I always play at the net. It is far more enjoyable than the back-and-front combination.

"Where am I to stand when my partner is receiving the service?" often asks the volleyer. Unless she is an exceptionally strong driver, and the net player on the

other side slow to run across, she should stand level with her partner. Otherwise she will frequently get the ball smashed and volleyed at her feet.

The lob and the passing shot are the chief means by which the baseline member scores. When she lobs short her partner must run back and join her. To stay up is foolish.

When both players happen to be at the net they must be level.

Do not keep on peppering one player in a double; put the ball at her partner occasionally and you may find her unprepared. Always, of course, play more to the weaker player.

The most effective lob in ladies' doubles is over the head of the opposing net player, when she is in the left court, into the extreme corner of that court. This means a long backhand shot for her partner.

The more usual way in mixed doubles, but not, I am convinced, the best, is for the lady to play at the back. This is the back-and-front combination of ladies' doubles. The tactics for the two are much the same. The lady, unless she has a very strong and her partner a very weak backhand, should play in the right court.

When your partner runs into your court be prepared to cross into his. There is a great deal of changing courts in doubles. If both players are in one court and the ball is played into the other you are not combining properly, and the fault is probably yours. Let your partner deal with overhead balls and don't accuse him of poaching if he is trying to cut in and kill at the net. He is there for that. Above all things avoid hitting at the man at the net.

CHAPTER VIII

TOURNAMENT TENNIS

THERE is no more enjoyable holiday than a round of tournaments. The play, with all its excitements, hopes, fears, joys, disappointments, the many social aspects, the long days in the fresh summer air, and the many delightful friendships make of the tournament an earthly paradise.

The ambition of every girl who plays tennis should be to compete in one. Her first tournament will never be her last!

Many tournaments have special events for girls and boys. This is as it should be.

Tournaments, as you will soon discover for yourselves, are very different from friendly games. Players are out to win. No mercy is shown. You feel nervous and self-conscious; you cannot do your-

self justice; you were inclined to fancy yourself a little, even to imagine secretly that you might win. After being knocked out in the first round by some one you thought you might beat, you feel discouraged and spiritless.

If that is your experience you share it with thousands of others. It is all a very wholesome part of tournament discipline. Your opportunity will come all in good time.

Never be either unduly cast down or unduly lifted up by your early experiences of tournament tennis.

My advice to young players is to enter for every event. This is the way to gain experience and practice.

When drawn against a first-class player in open singles, go out for your shot. Never on any account scratch to a good player. It is robbing yourself of useful experience, and her of needed practice.

You mean it for modesty, but your opponent, if one of the right sort, will tell you that it is a mistake.

In handicaps singles you will at first receive a long start. Your best chance of winning is to play a bold game. Take risks, especially against players giving you a big start. Remember that when receiving odds you take risks, giving them you play steady.

Concentrate on the game. Do not look round at the crowd; and do not imagine that the crowd are looking at you.

It is well to have a few practice hits before beginning a match. But do not overdo this.

Accept the umpire's decisions, however wrong they may seem to you, without any sign of disagreement. The umpire is in the best possible position for seeing all the lines, and you are just as likely—more likely—to be wrong than he is. Quite

apart from that it is bad form to grumble at umpires' decisions. In fact, all kinds of grumbling and excuses are bad form.

Another bit of advice—be punctual. This helps the management. You are not the only player in the tournament. Unpunctuality affects others. Players are sometimes "scratched" because they are not on hand when wanted. Possibly they thought, or hoped, they would not be wanted and took the risk of being late. The unexpected happens, and to their chagrin they find themselves out of the event.

Referees are very good in obliging competitors wherever they can, but they are rightly down on careless unpunctuality. Keep on the right side of the referee. Study him and he will study you. He wields great power, and has as long a memory for unselfish and considerate

competitors as he has for selfish and inconsiderate ones.

And tournaments do bring out character. If you want to be thought well of, always be glad to umpire when asked. Otherwise you may find it hard to get umpires for your own matches.

It is different when you become a "crack" and wish to be at your best in the finals. Umpiring is tiring for the eyes, and, coming just before your own matches, bad for your play.

Your duties as an umpire, after seeing that the net is the right height, are to judge whether balls are in or out, to decide "lets," and to call the score. And you may as well call the state of the game in the right way. Here is an example: "3 games to 1, Miss Blank leads in the second set; first set to Miss Blank." And do call the score loud enough for spectators interested in the game to hear it.

It will be useful to give a few hints of a common sense nature with regard to diet and training and physical care.

You must have a good warm ulster coat of some kind. A white or colored blanket coat is best and most usual. After getting hot it is a great comfort and safeguard to get into this. It is foolish to sit about after a heated match without a wrap of any sort.

In cold weather it is well to start in a jersey or "sweater." You can never play your best if cold.

Girls might copy men more in this and other respects. Men think so much of physical fitness that many of the leading players are carefully massaged before important matches in the championship. I am not, of course, hinting that this is necessary for every one, but I do think girls should take more care of themselves than they do.

Diagram of a Singles court. The posts stand 3 feet outside the court on each side. The height of the net is 3 feet 6 inches at the posts. When pulled taut the net must be 3 feet high in the center.

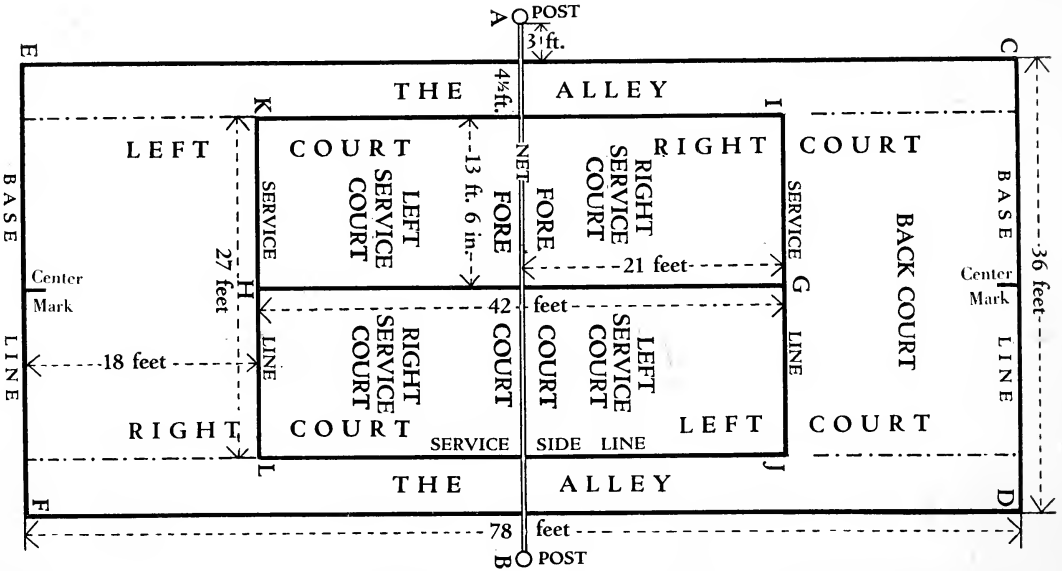


Diagram of a Doubles court. Lines IK and JL should extend to the service lines only. The dot-and-dash lines show how the service side lines would be extended to the base lines in a court marked for both the singles and doubles game.

Personally I keep myself fit by daily exercises, as I have previously stated in Chapter I.

If you want to do your best at tournaments do not dance till the small hours of the morning, nor eat the richest pastries provided at the tournament teas.

If you are thirsty during the course of a match be content with cold water, or, better still, nothing.

Let me say in conclusion—never brood over your matches. Many nervous, imaginative, and highly strung players play their matches over many times in advance. At night they think about them instead of going to sleep. Accordingly, they are tired out long before the end of the tournament and fail to play up to form.

Do not discuss tennis too much during the course of a tournament, and especially avoid talking about your coming matches. It is unnerving.

CHAPTER IX

COMMON FAULTS AND MISCELLANEOUS HINTS

RUNNING round the ball is a very common fault with girls. Strong on her forehand a girl will manoeuvre to get her forehand to every shot. She will run round the ball instead of remaining where she is and taking it with her backhand.

Two evils result from this. Her backhand is deprived of the practice which would strengthen it; she gets herself out of position.

Strengthen your weak shots, is the advice for all players.

Another very common fault with girls is to play their shots across the body. By this I mean they play with the body facing the net instead of sideways to it.

It is impossible to play a backhand like this. The racket cannot be taken back; there can be no swing; and the feet are in a hopeless position. It does not cramp the forehand so much, for the arm is free of the body.

An almost universal failing of girls is not being able to see when there is spin on the ball, or of what kind.

To every man and boy it is obvious that a ball hit in a certain way will have a certain kind of spin on it. Thus, a half-volley will nearly always have back-spin. That is to say, it will hang or break back towards the net after pitching. A man can tell by the way the ball is spinning what it will do on pitching. But girls do not seem to understand this, and accordingly are much at sea with all spinning balls.

No doubt it is due to lack of training in ball games. But this excuse will not

hold good much longer, for girls are now scientifically coached in all ball games.

Attempting to drive hard from near the net is a fault which loses girls many points. It is almost impossible to drive hard a ball which pitches near the net and does not rise above it. The ball if it crosses the net must go out, unless a great deal of top-spin is put on it, and comparatively few young players understand how to impart top-spin to the ball.

Do not get too near the ball when driving. You must keep well away from it. Keep it at arm's length. Watch any of the best drivers and you will observe how they keep away from the ball. I have my arm quite straight when driving. Many good players bend the elbow slightly, but I believe it would be better if they did not.

By getting too near the ball you cramp your shot, often get the ball on the splice

of the racket, and, of course, lose power. Then it is hard to keep your eye on the ball.

This getting too near the ball is a very common failing.

So is rushing at the ball. You may run as hard as you like to get to the ball, but you must steady yourself for the actual shot.

When you dash in at a short ball, and by a great effort just reach it, it is a pity to waste this effort by hitting it out. Your impetus, unless you counteract this by a restrained hit, will cause you to hit the ball too hard. This is a very common experience.

If you hit the net with your racket when making a shot, or if the net touches any part of you, the point goes against you.

Inexperienced players will catch a ball which is palpably out, with hand or racket.

If you do this in a tournament you lose the point. The ball is in play until it strikes the ground outside the court. In a very high wind a ball which had gone well outside the court is sometimes blown into court again. Make a habit in practice games of always letting a ball which is out drop to the ground.

You may not stretch your racket over the net to play a ball. You must wait till the ball is on your side of the net before playing it. But it is *not* against you if having hit the ball, on your own side of the net, your racket finishes the other side.

Ignorant players are surprised when an umpire disallows a stroke which has scooped or shovelled the ball over the net. The stroke is an unfair one because the ball has been hit more than once.

Have I told you how necessary it is for you to keep on your toes all the while? Runners who wish to get a good start

would never dream of standing on the flat of their feet.

Be careful not to make foot-faults. If either foot touches or crosses the line before the ball has left the racket, or, if both feet are off the ground, in fact, if you jump when the ball is being hit, or if you take a walking or running start you are guilty of a foot-fault.

Use your head. Place your shots. Do not hit wildly. Three hints which every one can appreciate and anyone obey. There is a great difference between hitting "wildly" and hitting hard.

If you are a back-of-the-court player and find yourself on the service-line after playing a shot, with no time to get back to the baseline, go on up to the net. It is up or back in tennis. There is no middle course.

In mixed doubles your partner should serve first, unless you are the better server.

And the better server should have the choice of ends. It is ridiculous for a girl who serves, possibly underhand, to accept the better end, with the sun at her back—politely offered by her partner—and make him serve with the sun in his eyes. The stronger player should be given every advantage. There is no such thing in tennis as "ladies first." You must do your best to win and use every lawful means for doing so.

If you read my little book, with a determination to carry out its instructions, and study the photographs carefully, you should greatly improve your game and enjoy your tennis more.

CHAPTER X

THE EVOLUTION OF LADIES' PLAY

The following chapter was not written by Mlle. Lenglen, but is so intimately associated with the subject of her book that it is reproduced on account of its instructive value. The writer, Mrs. Larcombe, will be recognized as a former British lady champion, and therefore well qualified to present her views.

As the introduction shows, this letter appeared in the *Field,* of London, the foremost authority on British sport and all topics connected with the realm of the out-of-doors.

Mrs. Larcombe writes:

Sir—The fact, noted in the *Field* recently that several years ago there were as many good volleyers as base-liners, is a

timely reminder that the volley (in women's tennis) is no modern asset. We believe casually that the game becomes harder, and that more is demanded of its votaries as time goes on. Then we are brought up suddenly against a wall of hard fact such as that and compelled to think. *Has* the game improved? Or is it only that lawn tennis itself is more popular and the standard of the *average* player considerably higher? I am inclined to think that is nearer the truth, and that perhaps the spread of tournaments is to be both praised and blamed for this result. Competitions afford the average player a chance of improvement through meeting good opponents, but the better player is apt to go right through the tournament season *without* the desire for improvement and with the desire never to be beaten. She has no time to cultivate other strokes, no time to learn volleying. If

she did so she might be beaten by someone considered below her form!

I fancy something of the spirit of the game has been lost in this way. There is less pleasure in the game and more in the victory than is compatible with true sport. That is why I do not like to see the *Field* attribute Mrs. Chambers' surrender of her base-line position solely to the efficacy of the volley. It means, surely, a great deal more than that. Mrs. Chambers' views are wide—she does not concern herself only with the winning of a match. For one thing there is the enjoyment of it to be considered. Mrs. Chambers has known the value of the volley for years, and, paradoxical as it may sound, she would have been a volleyer long ago but for the fact that she was a superb baseliner. She has been supreme at her own game, consequently she has enjoyed playing it and seen no particular need of any

change in her methods. That change, to my mind, may be attributed to her sense of pleasure in the game and her thought for the future as well as to her knowledge that volleying pays. An essential quality for a base-liner is fleetness of foot. That is one of the first things to disappear as one gradually, or suddenly, joins the Old Brigade. To the volleyer fleetness of foot, although valuable, is not as necessary. Lack of it can be covered by knowledge and anticipation.

So the two possibilities of greater enjoyment in the game and a longer term of good play are at least as important as the more obvious fact—especially obvious at the moment—that the volleyer wins. I feel sure these points are in Mrs. Chambers' mind, and, at a time when so many women are shivering on the brink of the volley, it would be well for them to follow her lead and ponder the manifold

advantages instead of thinking only of the one—winning.

I know it is quite easy to advocate volleying. The stumbling block is that volleying itself is *not* easy, although it is not as difficult as some players make it. Several women wish earnestly to become volleyers and string up their courage to the point of standing (in a very frightened attitude!) near the net. But they seldom take the trouble beforehand to find out anything about how it (meaning the volley) should be done, and they cannot sustain their courage through the rather fearful process of acquiring it. I have been a volleyer always, and I wish I could help everybody to learn "how." Let me add hastily that my meaning is not that everyone should model herself on any one player. Most players have their own distinct style, and some have the strength and ability to be a law unto themselves—

Miss Ryan is a notable example. But the ordinary woman will find it advisable to volley in the easiest way, and I am most decidedly an adherent of the easiest way. Many would-be volleyers bring their base-line methods up to the net and expect success to follow naturally. I'm afraid it won't!

I did not start out with the intention of offering any "hints to beginners" or anything of the kind, only to urge the pleasure of volleying as well as the profit. But being by nature thoroughly didactic (or helpful—take your choice), I cannot resist the opportunity of trying to reach some women who read the *Field,* but would never open any treatise on the game. Here, then, are a few hints.

Keep your racket still when volleying. You have to swing at a ground shot to put pace on the ball. As a rule when a ball is volleyed the pace is already on it. The

direction only has to be changed, and that is most accurately controlled by a firm racket, the wrist being used for a "follow through." Keep the head of the racket up. Not that this is the better position in which to play the ball, but the action of tilting up the head stiffens the wrist in just the right way. It gives that tenseness necessary to volleying—the very opposite of the loose wrist used in a swing.

Try hard to cultivate anticipation. Playing on the base-line you wouldn't dream of standing still on one side-line while the other was at the mercy of your opponent. But sometimes when you volley there is an even larger "opening" that you have never attempted to cover! Think of where your opponent can put the ball and move there. Don't stand obstinately in perhaps the only place in court she cannot!

Two instances will demonstrate my meaning most simply. Suppose yourself in the right-hand court and the ball in your opponent's right-hand corner near the base-line. It is useless for you to stand near your own "railway lines." Your opponent cannot put the ball there. Your partner will have had to move to her (or his) side of the court to guard that side-line. *You* must move in to the centre to guard that.

In another instance you are still in the right court and the ball is in your opponents' *left*-hand corner. In this case your enemy has an easy shot down your side-line, and you must move out towards that to cover it, your partner closing up the centre. Get these two elementary examples well into your head and you will understand the need for anticipation in volleying. As you go on you will learn more and more about the angles of the court

and the shots that are possible and those that are not.

First learn "how" and then persevere. That is the road that success will follow. When you have reached your destination —and, indeed, even on the way there— you will get more fun out of the game than you ever did playing solely from the base-line. ETHEL W. LARCOMBE.

The *Field* remarks on the foregoing: "The note, upon which Mrs. Larcombe founds her valuable contribution, expressly stated that 'it was not concerned with the motive for the change.' It suggested that the spirit of adventure may have prompted Mrs. Lambert Chambers to come to the net. We never imagined that she came up solely to win."

TENNIS CLOTHES FOR WOMEN

The out-of-doors has become an important part in the life of the present-day woman and probably no better indication of this is seen than in the multiplicity of shops devoted to women's apparel for sport.

A. G. Spalding & Bros. early recognized this trend and several years ago established in their building on Fifth Avenue, New York, a separate and complete department devoted exclusively to women's wear. Imported garments for tennis, golf, and motoring; sport hats, neckwear and hosiery are featured.

That the idea of a women's sport wear department in connection with the sale of athletic sport equipment was logical is evidenced by the great success of the first venture and the extension of the idea to other stores of the firm in various cities. Chicago has a beautiful women's sport specialty shop at 211 South State Street; San Francisco took instantly to the innovation, as did also the other leading cities of the Pacific

Coast, while all of the larger municipalities of the Middle West and the East are also served.

WHAT TO WEAR ON THE TENNIS COURT

In selecting the proper costume for tennis a woman's first consideration necessarily must be comfort combined with perfect freedom of movement. In trying to attain this, however, it must not be forgotten that neatness and style are also essential, since a woman is never more under observation than when on a court, especially if, as during a tournament, there is a critical gallery.

The first essential is a well-cut white skirt, of sufficient fullness to allow freedom in running and not longer than seven inches from the ground. The material may be of serge or a light weight cloth, silk, linen, or a cotton fabric, the last named being by far the most practical.

With this is worn a sports shirt of tub silk, madras or linen. It should have a turned down collar and, if worn without a sweater, be snugly belted and made with a tucked bosom, which does not wrinkle as easily as the plainer models.

Soft ribbed white wool hose with or without clocks of a contrasting color are the most comfortable and are very smart, but a lighter weight stocking may be worn if desired.

The best shoe is the low buckskin, in all white or white and black. Its lasting qualities and the

support it gives to the foot make it far superior to the ordinary sneaker, which must be constantly whitened to look well and which is not recommended if there is a tendency to fallen arches. Spiked shoes for playing on grass are made in white and are much better looking than those in black.

There is no doubt that the ideal garment for tennis, as for all other sports, is the sweater. With or without sleeves, of light or heavy weight wool or silk, and of the most exquisite shades, it is suitable for all weathers and very becoming as well as practical. The most popular model is the simple slip-on, which allows perfect freedom of movement and yet gives that trim waist line so much to be desired. When worn with a white skirt and shirtwaist and a sports hat of the same color, there is no prettier costume.

The correct hats are plain and severe, of rough straw, leghorn, bangkok, or panama. They may have a straight or mushroom brim and should have merely a narrow grosgrain ribbon band or a soft crepe folded band.

The hair should be confined with a hairnet and, if no hat be worn, a ribbon snood is often used.

Simplicity, immaculate neatness, and well chosen colors are the points that distinguish the fastidious and well-dressed woman.

SELECTING A RACKET

Weight, balance, size of handle and shape constitute the four main essentials in the selection of a tennis racket. Ash is the principal wood used in the manufacture of rackets and the heavier its weight the stronger a racket will be. It is therefore well to select as heavy a racket as will be consistent with one's strength, but not so heavy as to impair the quickness and accuracy of the stroke.

Balance is just as important as weight. Often a poorly balanced racket will feel heavier than one well balanced, although the latter may be an ounce or more heavier. The usual balance should be from 12½ to 13½ inches, measuring from end of handle.

Of the utmost importance is the size of the handle. The general idea that a racket should be gripped tightly at all times is erroneous. Only at moment of impact is it necessary. At other times a fairly loose but firm grasp is advisable. A tight grip will cramp the muscles of the arms and interfere with the start of the stroke. As

the size of the handle should vary with the size of the hand, no set measurement can be applied. The best method is to try several sizes of handles and select that which seems most comfortable.

The larger the surface of the racket, generally speaking, the longer the ball will "cling" and consequently more "cut" imparted. The tremendous cut and spin service developed by American players has influenced them in preferring a racket of a broad, oval type, while the European expert usually adheres to the slim, elliptical model.

However, the final selection of a racket after all is a matter of personal choice, but the foregoing remarks are given as an aid in considering qualifications.

As a matter of information it may be stated that a national women's championship was won with a racket weighing 13¾ ounces and having a balance of 13 inches from end of handle; size of handle, 5 inches; surface of the narrow, elliptical style.

Players who wish advice concerning the selection of a suitable tennis racket—or, in fact, on any matter concerning the game—should write to any of the stores of A. G. Spalding & Bros., a list of which is given on the inside front cover of this book.

As the first essential of proficiency is a knowledge of the rules, it is suggested that players ob-

tain a copy of the current Spalding Tennis Annual and read the rules thoroughly. The publishers of the Annual have gone further than the mere printing of the rules, however, and have interpolated numerous paragraphs, which will be found of great help in clarifying points that may be possibly subject to misinterpretation.

Besides the usual data which an annual publication will necessarily contain, the information that is printed exclusively in the Spalding Annual regarding the methods of conducting a tournament, rules for handicapping, duties of officials, and even etiquette for spectators, will more than repay reading. Probably the most important feature of the book, after all, next to the rules, is the chapter which describes a simple and inexpensive method of laying out a tennis court. Interest in the game often would be sustained and stimulated if the proper method had been followed in the first instance. A well-known expert tells in simple language and comparatively few words his method of making a court, which anyone can follow without a great deal of trouble. It is well worth reading.

COMMUNITY COUNTRY CLUBS

The growth of athletic sport has created a demand for a more general knowledge of how a club may be organized and conducted. Not the

large clubs that are a part of the life of the large cities, but a small club of community interest—one might call it a neighborhood club—in which seasonal sport combined with the social feature would be the main idea.

With this object in view a book has been prepared for the Spalding Athletic Library series which will go a long way toward helping those who contemplate the organization of a community club. This book tells how to organize and conduct clubs so that interest may be sustained and errors avoided. It costs 25 cents, and will prove a great help to those contemplating the organization of a club of purely community purposes or as an adjunct of industrial organization.

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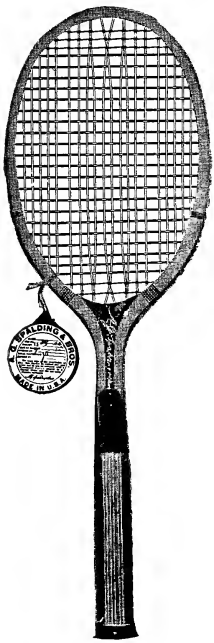

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SPALDING "AUTOGRAPH" No. AA RACKET

Black trim, including depressed throat piece and rawhide reinforcement inside and out at bend; gut throat winding. Full bow frame, no bevel. Four-sided all cedar handle, 5, 5¼ or 5⅜ inches. Special expert stringing. . . . . **Without Cover.** Each, **$15.00**

SPALDING HACKETT & ALEXANDER MODEL HA

Has depressed throat piece, rawhide reinforcement inside and out at bend, gut throat winding. Full bow frame, no bevel. Handles are four-sided, all cedar, 5, 5¼ or 5⅜ inches. Stringing of best quality Spalding Autograph gut. . . . . **Without Cover.** Each, **$15.00**

"MOLLA BJURSTEDT" AUTOGRAPH MODEL MB

Built with depressed throat piece, gut throat winding. Full bow frame, no bevel. The handle is of cedar, four-sided, with small size grip. Weight 13¾ ounces and slightly over or under. Same model as used by Miss Molla Bjurstedt, and her autograph is stamped on each racket. Best Spalding Autograph gut. . . . . **Without Cover.** Each, **$15.00**

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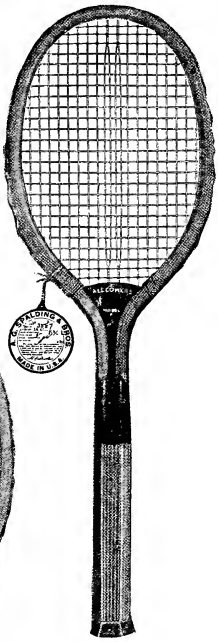
SPALDING GOLD MEDAL RACKETS

"ALL COMERS'" RACKET

Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

No. **GMF.** Walnut throat piece; shoulders gut wrapped, special side reinforcement of rawhide. Stringing double in the central portion, latest expert style. best lambs' gut. Four-sided cedar handles; 5, 5¼, 5⅜ inches.

Without Cover
Each, **$12.50**



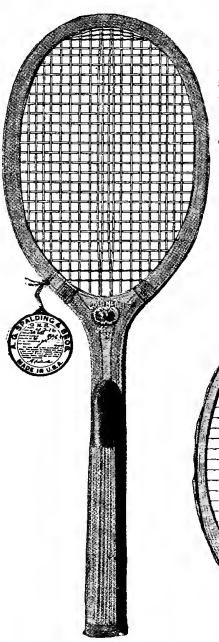
No. GMF

GOLD MEDAL Model H

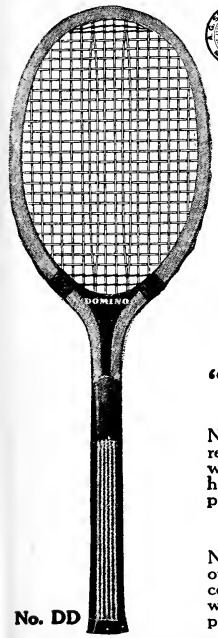
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

No. **GMH.** White holly depressed throat piece, rawhide reinforcement inside and outside, and gut wound shoulders. Four-sided cedar handles, 5, 5¼ and 5⅜ inches in circumference. The stringing is double in the central portion in the popular expert style, best lambs' gut.

Without Cover
Each, **$12.05**



No. GMH



No. DD

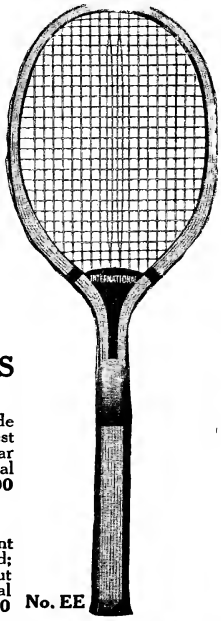
"FAMOUS MODEL" RACKETS

SPALDING "DOMINO"

No. **DD.** Depressed walnut throat, with rawhide reinforcement inside and outside. Frame of finest white ash, high polished; combed Spanish cedar handle, leather capped. Double stringing in central portion. Gut wound shoulders. . Each, **$10.00**

SPALDING "INTERNATIONAL"

No. **EE.** Walnut throat, rawhide reinforcement outside. Frame of finest white ash, highly polished; combed Spanish cedar handle, leather capped. Gut wrapped shoulders. Double stringing in central portion. Selected gut stringing. . Each, **$10.00**



No. EE

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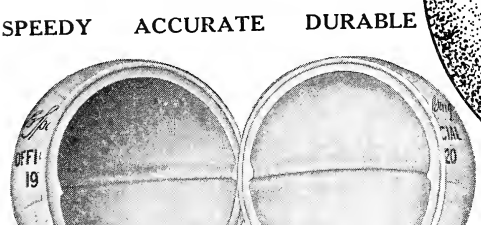
OFFICIAL
TWO-PIECE
TENNIS BALL

No. OOH

SPEEDY ACCURATE DURABLE



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NO LEAKAGE. No Plug—the ball is blown up before being vulcanized—doing away with leakage.

FRESH BALLS. Shipments of balls from our factory to our branch stores are timed to parallel the demand. This service assures a perfect ball reaching you.

TWO-PIECE

PERFECT FLIGHT AND BOUND. All around evenness of wall and absence of plug assures this.

COVER PERMANENCY. Made from the very highest grade of Australian wool, cemented on by new process, assuring permanent adhesion. No sewed seams.

NO "RATTLERS." This annoyance eliminated, because there is no plug to get loose.

Each, 60c. Doz. $7.20

Spalding Practice Tennis Ball

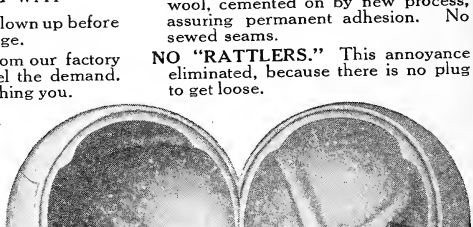
No. 1. Well made balls of new stock. For practice or wet weather play. Plain rubber, not covered.

Each, 35c. Dozen, $4.00

Wright & Ditson "Championship" Tennis Ball

No. 5. Best quality W. & D. balls.

Each, 60c. Dozen, $7.20



THE OLD FOUR-PIECE PLUG STYLE
Illustrated to show the kind that Spalding does NOT make.

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